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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2003

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL
Decree crisis in government - Sabah
Gul to ministers: State interests at stake, no room for emotions - Hurriyet
61,500 U.S. troops to stay in Turkey six months - Vatan
U.S. trusts northern Iraqi Kurds too much - Turkiye
Barzani goes too far - Aksam
Kurds don't want Turkish troops in northern Iraq - Vatan
Annan brings his third plan himself - Sabah

OPINION MAKERS
Reluctant decree - Yeni Safak
Ankara awaiting a final gesture from U.S. before enacting decree - Radikal
Bush threatens Turkey - Cumhuriyet
KDP: Turkish occupation worse than Baghdad regime - Radikal
Erdogan welcomes new Annan plan - Zaman
Ankara: Third Annan plan insufficient - Cumhuriyet
Annan: tragedy if no compromise in Cyprus - Milliyet

FINANCIAL JOURNALS

Amb. Pearson: We are close to agreement w/GOT - Dunya
Oil nightmare: Crude oil up to \$36 - Finansal Forum

BRIEFING

Iraq: The GOT agreed on Monday to send to parliament a decree for deployment of foreign troops in Turkey, despite the fact that no compromise has been worked out with the U.S. Cabinet ministers who initially refused to sign the bill were convinced by Prime Minister Gul, who promised that the issue would not be discussed in parliament before the U.S. agrees to meet Turkish demands. Turkey will provide logistical support to the passage of 61,500 foreign troops to northern Iraq over three months, according to the resolution. 17,000 U.S. troops will be stationed in Turkey for rapid deployment in cases of emergency, and the remaining 44,750 will go to northern Iraq, according to reports. Government Spokesman Sener said that although many ministers opposed the draft, it was ultimately signed by all ministers. Papers view parliamentary approval as unlikely unless the U.S. accepts Turkish demands. Ankara expects a goodwill gesture from the U.S. to overcome parliamentary resistance. Parliamentary Speaker Arinc's strong opposition to the decree is a grave concern for the AKP leadership. The U.S. is reportedly annoyed by Turkish demands for written guarantees, and President Bush warned Foreign Minister Yakis during his Washington visit that Turkey might be abandoned by the IMF, WB, and WTO. The President also cautioned that the U.S. would act together with Kurdish groups in northern Iraq in the absence of Turkish support. Having settled the issue of the \$15 billion economic aid package, Turkey and the U.S. are now working to reach agreement regarding military and political issues. Some Turkish journalists wishing to cover the Iraqi opposition congress in Erbil were denied access by the KDP, who said that TGS permission was not sufficient to cross the Iraqi border. KDP officials regard the Turkish presence in northern Iraq as a bigger threat than the regime in Baghdad, according to reports.

Cyprus: Ankara, Athens and the sides in Cyprus are reviewing the third Annan plan. Ankara is reportedly not happy with the new plan, which does not include changes on the question of sovereignty, or on the bi-zonal structure or property issues. Denktas has criticized the plan for 'seeking a continuation of the Greek Cypriot Republic.' After meeting with Greek Cypriot President Papadopoulos on Monday, Greek Prime Minister Simitis said he saw no chance for a solution with the new plan. UN Secretary General Annan, in Ankara for meetings with top-level Turkish officials, said he would announce the latest changes to the plan in Cyprus, and that the plan was the last chance for a solution before the new deadline of March 7. After meeting with Annan in Ankara on Monday, AKP leader Erdogan said the revised Annan plan had improved chances for a compromise.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iraq

"Bad signs for Turkey from northern Iraq"
Fatih Altayli argued in mass appeal Hurriyet (2/25): "It looks like northern Iraq will be a painful issue for Turkey for the next 10 years, as the strong anti-Turkish statements from the northern Iraqi Kurdish leaders clearly indicate. This was, in fact, a crisis foretold. Because the American and other western "so-called" NGOs have been working to manipulate the Kurdish groups in the region since 1991. Turkish governments made a terrible oversight and handed over the responsibility to the military, instead of focusing on the political aspect of the issue. The political control of the region went to the Western powers, predominantly the US and France. Now we are just paying for this mistake."

"Turkey should say no to US"
Mustafa Karaalioglu argued in Islamic-intellectual Yeni Safak (2/25): "The Turkish government has the best possible international atmosphere to justify the illegitimacy of the US action plan on Iraq. Turkey should act with pride as well as political dignity so that this country does not serve as a logistical facility for the American invasion plans. . The AKP government should consider Turkey's regional interests as opposed to Turkey's economic losses. The US plan for Iraq looks like a deliberate crime and the AKP has enough popular support for not taking side with it. . Otherwise Turkey will completely miss the chance to stand against any of the American action plans for the Middle East in a near future. Taking side with the US means Turkey sells all its regional interests to 6 billion dollars."

PEARSON